

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NDJAME 00001 020817Z

14

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 XMB-02 AID-05 CCO-00

CIAE-00 OTPE-00 FCC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-05 USIA-06

COME-00 BIB-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 /080 W

----- 087051

R 020647Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 755

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 0001

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL, CD, US, FR

SUBJ: GOC RECEIVES FRENCH TELECOMMUNICATIONS BID WHICH COULD
AFFECT GOC NEGOTIATIONS WITH US SUPPLIERS AND REQUESTS URGENT
EXIM BANK AND COMSAT CONSIDERATION GOC/GT&E PROPOSAL

REF: NDJAMENA 2383; NDJAMENA'S MEMCON OF NOV 20 1975 (NOTAL)

1. MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION KAMOUQUE REQUESTED
URGENT MEETING WITH CHARGE DEC 30 WHICH ATTENDED BY MINISTER
TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAHAMAT. KAMOUQUE OPENED MEETING WITH
RECAPITULATION OF CHAD NEED FOR INDEPENDENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS
LINKS TO OUTSIDE WORLD AND IMPROVED DOMESTIC SYSTEM. GOC VERY
PLEASED WITH PROGRESS MADE WITH GENERAL TELEPHONE AND ELECTRONICS
--COMPANY'S PROPOSALS FIT GOC'S NEEDS AND APPEAR ECONOMICALLY
VIABLE. GOC REGARDS SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION FIRST STEP (LINKAGE
NDJAMENA TO OUTSIDE WORLD) AS EXTREMELY URGENT, AND HAS BEEN
TOLD BY GT&E THAT THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY JULY 1. KAMOUQUE,
WITH FERVOR REMINISCENT OF "THE MUSIC MAN," STATED HE HAS LARGE
US BICENTENNIAL FLAG IN HIS DESK DRAWER WHICH HE HOPES FLY
PROMINENTLY NEXT JULY 4 OVER EXTENSIVE CEREMONIES DURING WHICH
PRESIDENT MALLOUM WOULD MAKE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CALL ON NEW
AMERICAN SYSTEM TO PRESIDENT FORD TO EXTEND BICENTENNIAL GREET-
INGS (SIC). MINISTER MAHAMAT THEN OBSERVED THAT PERIPHERAL
PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS OF EXIM AND CONSAT THREATENED GOAL OF
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PAGE 02 NDJAME 00001 020817Z

SIGNING ACCORD WITH GT&E BEFORE END OF JANUARY WHICH NECESSARY

IF JULY 1 GOAL TO BE MET. MAHAMAT STRESSED THAT MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH ASPECTS PROJECT COMPLETED IN DETAIL, I.E., TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY SURVEYS. ACCORDING MAHAMAT, GOC PAYING FRANCE-CABLES 160 MILLION CFA ANNUALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICES, LARGE PART OF WHICH COULD BE CHANNELLED TO NEW SYSTEM. MAHAMAT ESTIMATED THAT COSTS COULD BE AMORTIZED OVER AS LITTLE AS SIX YEARS WITH PROFITS FROM SYSTEM ITSELF WHICH WILL BE EARMARKED FOR REPAYMENT.

2. KAMOUQUE AND MAHAMAT THEN EXPLAINED THAT NEW ELEMENT HAD BEEN INTRODUCED INTO TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUATION WHICH MADE RAPID PROGRESS, AGAIN BY END OF JANUARY, MANDATORY. GOC PREFERS US EQUIPMENT. DECISION TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENT WITH US FIRM BASED IN PART UPON FACT THAT FRANCE-CABLE, APPARENTLY ONLY SERIOUS COMPETITOR, COULD NOT OFFER COMPLETION FIRST STAGE UNTIL MID-1977, AND WAS HAZY ON FINANCING. MAHAMAT HAD JUST RECEIVED, HOWEVER, LENGTHY CABLE FROM FRANCE-CABLES, PORTIONS OF WHICH SHOWN CHARGE, INDICATING THAT FRANCE-CABLES WOULD UNDERTAKE COMPLETE FIRST STAGE BY JULY 1976, RPT 1976, AND THAT ADVANTAGEOUS FINANCING AVAILABLE. KAMOUQUE STATED GOC HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME LEAKAGE OF AMERICAN DEAL TO FRENCH, DESPITE FACT US TERMS KNOWN ONLY TO TWO MINISTERS, PRESIDENT AMLLOUM, AND GOC AMBASSADOR WASHINGTON ALINGUE. GT&E TEAM WHICH VISITED CHAD SOME WEEKS AGO WAS HOUSED IN GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE RATHER THAN HOTEL, HAD MEALS SERVED IN HOUSE, AND PROVIDED WITH MESSENGERS FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH GOC AND INSTRUCTED NOT USE TELEPHONE DISCUSS ANY ASPECTS OF PROPOSAL. AT THE SAME TIME, GOC HAS NOT USED FRENCH DOMINATED TELEX SYSTEM OR INTERNATIONAL MAILS FOR ITS CORRESPONDENCE WITH US, DEPENDING INSTEAD ON INDIVIDUAL COURIERS.

3. CHARGE RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD REPORT CONVERSATION TO WASHINGTON WITH RECOMMENDATION THAT DEPT SUPPORT GOC PLEA FOR QUICK CONSIDERATION EXIM AND COMSAT AND THAT PERIPHERAL REQUIREMENTS BE AS ABBREVIATED AS POSSIBLE. CHARGE CAUTIONED MINISTERS, HOWEVER, THAT EXIM AND COMSAT ARE HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL BANKERS AND TECHNICIANS RESPECTIVELY, AND THAT THEIR REQUIREMENTS BUILT UP AFTER YEARS EXPERIENCE IN ALLOCATING SCARCE RESOURCES AMONG WORLD-WIDE APPLICANTS. CHARGE OFFERED ASSISTANCE EMB ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER PREPARATION REQUIRE-
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PAGE 03 NDJAME 00001 020817Z

MENTS IF DESIRED.

4. COMMENT: (A) AS MUCH AS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE FOREIGN MINISTER'S BICENTENNIAL AMERICAN FLAG HOISTED PROMINENTLY DOWNTOWN NDJAMENA ON JULY 4, REAL REASON FOR CONCERN OF GOC ALMOST UNDOUBTEDLY FRANCE-CABLES OFFER TERMS SIMILAR THOSE OFFERED BY GT&E. EMB ACCEPTS GOC VIEW THAT ACCORD BY END JANUARY TRULY HIGHLY IMPORTANT. AS RESULT RECENT VISIT FRENCH MINISTER PUBLIC

WORKS GALLEY TO NDJAMENA (NDJAMENA 3248), MIXED FRANCO-CHADIAN TALKS ON FUTURE RELATIONS AND FRENCH ASSISTANCE TO CHAD LIKELY BEGIN EARLY JANUARY. IF GOC/GT&E ACCORD NOT EFFECTED WITHIN FAIRLY RAPID TIME FRAME, APPEARS VERY LIKELY TO EMBASSY THAT FRENCH MIGHT USE LEVERAGE OF TALKS AND CARROT OF FUTURE ASSISTANCE TO PRESSURE GOC INTO ACCEPTING FRANCE-CABLES OFFER TO PROBABLE EXCLUSION US SUPPLIERS. ALTHOUGH GOC SETS VERY HIGH PRIORITY ON DEVELOPING NEW COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM INDEPENDENTLY OF FRENCH, FOR TECHNICAL, SECURITY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS, NECESSITY CONTINUED FRENCH ASSISTANCE LIKELY MAKE GOC SUSCEPTIBLE TO GOC PRESSURE IF FIRM COMMITMENT NOT ALREADY MADE WITH US SUPPLIERS. (B) EXCEPT FOR BRIEF REFERENCES TO REQUIREMENT NUMBER TOURISTS, BUSINESSMEN, AND OTHER VISITORS ANNUALLY TO CHAD, NEITHER MINISTER SPECIFIED IN DETAIL TYPES OF INFORMATION GOC MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY IN SUPPLYING. AS WASHINGTON WELL AWARE, HOWEVER, STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CHAD LIMITED IN QUANTITY AND DUBIOUS IN QUALITY AT BEST. EMB RECOMMENDS, THEREFORE, THAT REQUIREMENTS WHICH NOT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL BE PARED TO MINIMUM. (C) EMB SECONDS GOC REQUEST THAT INFORMATION ON GT&E PROPOSAL BE TIGHTLY HELD ON BASIS COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY. DEPT PLEASE CONVEY REQUEST TO APPROPRIATE AID/W OFFICES, WHICH, BECAUSE OF AID REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT WITH LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION, MIGHT BE AWARE OF GT&E PROJECT WITHOUT BEING AWARE OF CONFIDENTIAL NATURE THEREOF. LITTLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), COMMUNICATION LINES, PROPOSALS (BID)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NDJAME00001
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760001-0021
From: NDJAMENA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760190/aaaadbyi.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NDJAMENA 2383
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOC RECEIVES FRENCH TELECOMMUNICATIONS BID WHICH COULD AFFECT GOC NEGOTIATIONS WITH US SUPPLIERS AND REQUESTS URGENT
TAGS: ETEL, CD, US, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006